

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUALA 03177 040033Z

11

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-09 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-04 PA-02 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-12 AID-07 DRC-01 /092 W

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R 031020Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7383

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 3177

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MY RP

SUBJECT: RTG-GOM TALKS ON MUSLIMS IN THAILAND

1. DURING A CONVERSATION WITH ZAITON IBRAHIM, MOFA SECRETARY GENERAL, ON THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE, HE EXPRESSED EMBARRASSMENT AND REGRET ABOUT MINISTER ASRI'S STATEMENT ON SOUTHERN THAILAND, AND SAID IT WAS PARTICULARLY UNFORTUNATE THAT PL HAD BEEN MADE DURING ISLAMIC FOREIGN MINISTERS' CONFERENCE. ASRI, HE CONTINUED, WAS EXPRESSING PERSONAL VIEW THAT ASPIRATIONS FOR GRETER AUTONOMY AMONG THE MALAYSIAN MOSLEMS WAS UNDERSTANDABLE, A VIEW SHARED BY MUCH OF HIS CONSTITUENCY IN THE BORDERING STATE OF KELANTAN.

2. ZAITON WENT ON TO SAY, SOMEWHAT PLAINTIVELY, THAT IN BOTH THE PHILIPPINES AND THAILAND, GOVERNMENT NEGLECT OF MOSLEM MINORITIES HAD CREATED LOCAL TENSIONS AND DISSATISFACTION WHICH FLOWED ACROSS THE BORDER AND THRUST THE PROBLEMS ONTO THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT. "WE WOULD OBVIOUSLY PREFER NOT BEING INVOLVED," HE SAID, "BUT OUR CITIZENS HAVE FAMILY AND RELIGIOUS TIES WHICH IGNORE INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARIES.

3. HE SAID THAT HE HAD SEEN PRESS REPORTS THAT RTG
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PAGE 02 KUALA 03177 040033Z

WAS CONSIDERING CALLING FOR A MEETING BETWEEN SANYA

AND RAZAK TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN THAILAND.
HE THOUGHT IT UNWISE FOR GOM TO ENTER SUCH TALKS BECAUSE
IT WOULD IMPLY SOME OFFICIAL GOM ROLE ON RESPONSIBILITY
IN DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM IN SOUTHERN THAILAND. AT
THE SAME TIME REFUSAL TO TALK WOULD SUGGEST THE GOM HAD
SOMETHING TO HIDE AND WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH CLOSE
BILATERAL AND ASEAN RELATIONSHIP WITH THAILAND. IF
REQUEST WAS MADE, HE SAW NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO AGREE.
UNDERHILL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MOSLEMS, MEETINGS, POLITICAL SITUATION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974KUALA03177
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740177-0966
From: KUALA LUMPUR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740778/aaaacolq.tel
Line Count: 70
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07-Aug-2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RTG-GOM TALKS ON MUSLIMS IN THAILAND
TAGS: PFOR, MY, RP, TH, (IBRAHIM, ZAITON)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005